

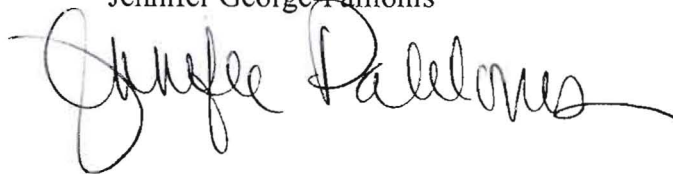
Circle of Blue and Ball State University: A Collaboration in Visual Storytelling

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

Season Schafer

Thesis Advisor
Jennifer George Palilonis

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jennifer Palilonis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jennifer" and last name "Palilonis" clearly legible.

Ball State University
Muncie, Indiana

July 2011

Expected Date of Graduation
August 2011

Spencer
Lindergrad
Thesis
LD
2489
.Z4
2011
.S33

Abstract

Ball State University takes pride in the many immersive learning programs it offers students. One of the 2011 programs was a collaboration between Ball State journalism graphics students and Circle of Blue, an organization which researches and publishes news on the global freshwater crisis. Students created interactive graphics for Circle of Blue to accompany the news organization's series titled, "Choke Point: China." This series focused on the nexus between water and energy in China and followed a similar series focused on the same topic in the United States. This honors thesis centered on the creation of an interactive documentary of the immersive learning project in which viewers can see how students and professionals benefitted from this unique collaboration. Several video interviews with students, professor Jennifer George-Palilonis and Circle of Blue staff members tell the story of how the collaboration began and why it was such an effective immersive experience for everyone involved. The interactive package also contains background information about Circle of Blue and Choke Point: China, photo galleries, biographies and links to the graphics created in the project.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Professor Jennifer George-Palilonis for advising me through this project. Although she is dedicated to so many different students, projects and organizations, including the Circle of Blue collaboration, she never hesitated to provide feedback or assistance when I needed it. Without her guidance and encouragement, I wouldn't have been able to complete such an important thesis or become a capable graphics reporter.

I would also like to thank the staff at Circle of Blue for being so helpful and for working with me to complete long-distance interviews. In particular, J. Carl Ganter was so gracious with his time and spent several hours sending me photos and video interviews from the Circle of Blue offices in Traverse City, Mich. It was a privilege and a pleasure to work with such a talented team of journalists.

I would especially like to thank Steven Travelbee, who helped me shoot 22 of the video interviews. He also sat with me while sifting through more than seven hours of footage and taught me how to edit the videos. Steven pushed me to succeed and motivated me when the project seemed too daunting. I couldn't have completed this thesis without the generous gifts of his time and patience.

Author's Statement

For my thesis, I wanted to create a multimedia documentary that would show the collaboration between journalism graphics students at Ball State University and professional journalists at Circle of Blue, an organization which researches and publishes news on the global freshwater crisis. I wanted to do this because I would be able to show many different angles of the story with different media. I spoke with my thesis advisor and considered creating a website or a DVD to showcase this information. However, a multimedia documentary seemed like a better capstone for my work as a journalism graphics students. The multimedia documentary approach mirrors the journalistic storytelling undertaken through the Circle of Blue collaboration. This project was the most challenging presentation that I created at Ball State because I had never coordinated anything so extensive and detailed by myself.

The goal of my project was to show how working with professionals for an immersive learning project could give students a richer and more complete journalistic experience. I chose to use what I learned as a journalism graphics major to create an interactive presentation for the project. As journalism continues to advance beyond print products, it is more important than ever that a visual reporter knows how to tie different media together. It is also important that visual reporters and all journalists be versatile in the software programs they know and the media they are comfortable using. I created many projects based on these standards, and I used skills learned in my journalism classes and visual communications classes. Likewise, I drew on experienced gained while developing interactive presentations for Ball Bearings magazine and a multimedia website for my 2010 study abroad trip to England. My thesis is constructed around well-rounded journalism and the design principles taught in the graphics sequence.

I used videos, photos, written narratives and interactivity to tell the story of this collaboration, enabling viewers to experience different parts of the immersive learning project in different ways. Interactivity allows viewers to get more out of a story than they might have by only reading a narrative. Knowledge of interactivity and user-friendly design is the one of the most important parts of my major, and I wanted to make sure that I brought these skills to the production of my thesis.

I first chose the topics that I wanted to focus on. This was necessary to break up such a dense story. These topics included: Circle of Blue; Choke Point: China, the story we reported on; the collaboration between the two groups and among students; immersive learning at Ball State University; the graphics produced by Ball State graphics students; students' experiences during the semester; and our contributions to Circle of Blue's storytelling. After choosing these topics, I interviewed participants as they would in a video documentary. Interview questions focused on all seven of the main topics outlined above. I also used photos, links to the graphics, and written narratives to help tell the story.

The journalism department emphasizes well-rounded reporting with lots of sources. Therefore, it was important for me to interview all of the students involved in the immersive project, the professor and graduate assistants and everyone involved at Circle of Blue. I had to schedule all of the interviews and coordinate meetings. I referenced Ball State University's website and provost Terry King when talking about immersive learning, and I also worked with Circle of Blue staff to get bios, photos and information about the organization. My research and reporting choices were based on my education in the Department of Journalism.

While working on this thesis, I became more comfortable with conducting interviews and working at the helm of a large project. The project also forced me to be aware of others' time

constraints and my own deadlines. I got a better sense of what it takes to work with storytelling through video, and I learned a lot about editing footage and sorting through the best and worst parts of an interview. Overall, working on such a large and multifaceted project dramatically enhanced my development as a multimedia journalist.

I learned how to sort through all of the information that I needed for my project, whether it was video interviews or photos, and choose what would best tell the story. I realized that although numerous quotes in the interviews were colorful and insightful, not all of them needed to be in the final project. Being an effective visual journalist means communicating the most ideas as concisely as possible. This project forced me to step back, focus and evaluate the importance of different information available for this project. This is important for my future work as a visual reporter because it helped me tell a condensed, but thorough, story. Such a skill is increasingly important, especially in the newsroom, when it's vital to efficiently use resources and money.

I also learned how to plan out such a big project to meet my personal goals and deadlines. Because this project was so important, I got more practice in prioritizing tasks and taking on new responsibilities. It helped prepare me to work for a news organization and gave me some of the best leadership experience that I had encountered at Ball State. I knew that I was fully accountable for the decisions regarding my thesis, and this motivated me to develop as a journalist and create a thesis that was challenging and fulfilling.

I did face a number of challenges while working on this project. I had never worked in Final Cut Pro, a video-editing software program, so I underestimated how long it would take to sort through seven hours of footage. Working with Adobe Flash, the program used to assemble my presentation, also took a considerable amount of time. Likewise, troubleshooting errors with

the videos or working with different file types was sometimes challenging, but working through my mistakes has made me much more confident in my abilities as a multimedia reporter. I now feel that I could create similar projects for future employers or as a freelance journalist.

I designed my thesis project using the same design style palette as the graphics we created for the immersive learning class. I did this so it would better reflect the immersive learning experience and so it could be included in a unified presentation on the Circle of Blue website.

Through this thesis, I hope students and faculty at Ball State better realize the importance of immersive learning. I especially hope that this project draws attention to the importance of immersive projects in the Department of Journalism. This thesis allowed me to show the benefits of immersive projects through facts, photos and video testimonials. The most important part of being a visual journalist is using multiple mediums to tell a single story in the most effective way possible. I feel like I accomplished this with my thesis, and I feel that my hard work did justice to the importance of this project and Ball State's amazing journalism graphics program.

Thesis Images

http://seasonschafer.com/files/thesis_final/thesis_final.html



[PARTNER](#) [STORY](#) [COLLABORATION](#) [CONTRIBUTION](#) [GRAPHICS](#) [PHILOSOPHY](#) [EXPERIENCE](#) 

[INTERVIEWS](#) [STAFF BIOS](#) [ABOUT COB](#)

WHAT IS CIRCLE OF BLUE?

Circle of Blue is a nonprofit organization that is working to inform the public about one of the world's biggest issues: the global water crisis. By combining the skills of journalists, scientists and designers, Circle of Blue has reported on some of the world's biggest water challenges. Two of these projects – Choke Point: U.S. and Choke Point: China explore the water/energy nexus in two of the world's superpowers.

Circle of Blue

has reported on a number of issues, including:

- Choke Point: U.S.
- Choke Point: China
- China Karst
- Water + Climate
- Tehuacan
- Inner Mongolia
- Bulk Water Exports
- Himalayas
- Asian Carp
- Water Views
- The Biggest Dry

Click on the links to see Circle of Blue's reports



J. Carl Ganter, Co-Founder and Director of Circle of Blue

Thesis Images

http://seasonschafer.com/files/thesis_final/thesis_final.html

PARTNER

STORY

COLLABORATION

CONTRIBUTION

GRAPHICS

PHILOSOPHY

EXPERIENCE

circle of blue

INTERVIEWS

STAFF BIOS

ABOUT COB

Circle of Blue

has reported on a number of issues, including:

- Choke Point: U.S.
- Choke Point: China
- China Karst
- Water + Climate
- Tehuacan
- Inner Mongolia
- Bulk Water Exports
- Himalayas
- Asian Carp
- Water Views
- The Biggest Dry

Click on the links to see Circle of Blue's reports

WHAT IS CIRCLE OF BLUE?

Circle of Blue is a nonprofit organization that is working to inform the public about one of the world's biggest issues: the global water crisis. By combining the skills of journalists, scientists and designers, Circle of Blue has reported on some of the world's biggest water challenges. Two of these projects – Choke Point: U.S. and Choke Point: China explore the water/energy nexus in two of the world's superpowers.



J. CARL GANTER, Co-Founder and Director
J. Carl is an award-winning photojournalist, writer and broadcast reporter. His reporting has appeared in most major magazines, newspapers and major television and radio networks. He has presented at the World Economic Forum, Aspen Ideas Festival and Clinton Global Initiative, and is a member of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars water working group, "Navigating Peace." He is co-founder of MediaVia LLC, a media production firm, and received his MSJ in investigative reporting and magazine writing at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism after graduating with honors from the University's American Studies Program.



KEITH SCHNEIDER, Senior Editor
Keith manages the Circle of Blue news desk and participates in multi-media story development reporting, editing, and production. He is a nationally known journalist, online communications specialist and environmental policy expert. Keith was a New York Times national correspondent for over a decade, where he continues to report as a special writer on energy, real estate, business, and technology. Before joining Circle of Blue, Keith was media and communications director at the US Climate Action Network and communications director at the Apollo Alliance. Keith developed one of the first independent online news desks as the founder and executive director of

PARTNER

STORY

COLLABORATION

CONTRIBUTION

GRAPHICS

PHILOSOPHY

EXPERIENCE

circle of blue

INTERVIEWS

STAFF BIOS

ABOUT COB

Circle of Blue

has reported on a number of issues, including:

- Choke Point: U.S.
- Choke Point: China
- China Karst
- Water + Climate
- Tehuacan
- Inner Mongolia
- Bulk Water Exports
- Himalayas
- Asian Carp
- Water Views
- The Biggest Dry

Click on the links to see Circle of Blue's reports

WHAT IS CIRCLE OF BLUE?

Circle of Blue is a nonprofit organization that is working to inform the public about one of the world's biggest issues: the global water crisis. By combining the skills of journalists, scientists and designers, Circle of Blue has reported on some of the world's biggest water challenges. Two of these projects – Choke Point: U.S. and Choke Point: China explore the water/energy nexus in two of the world's superpowers.

ABOUT CIRCLE OF BLUE

Circle of Blue is the international network of leading journalists, scientists and communications design experts that reports and presents the information necessary to respond to the global freshwater crisis. It is a nonprofit affiliate of the internationally recognized water, climate and policy think tank, the Pacific Institute.

Circle of Blue publishes WaterNews, the daily go-to source for global water news and data. It is also the co-founder of the global initiative, Designing Water's Future, which emerged from a World Economic Forum session led by Circle of Blue and Collins: Transformative Design.

Circle of Blue has presented at the Aspen Ideas Festival, Aspen Environment Forum, World Economic Forum and many of the leading international water conferences. It is a member of the Clinton Global Initiative and its reportage has been referenced recently by National Geographic, Christian Science Monitor and Vanity Fair. The Council on Foreign Relations calls Circle of Blue a "must read."

Circle of Blue practices non-advocacy journalism and science, striving to report issues to the highest standards of journalistic and scientific ethics. It subscribes to the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics.

Contributions to Circle of Blue are tax-deductible.

WATER

9

Thesis Images

http://seasonschafer.com/files/thesis_final/thesis_final.html

PARTNER

STORY

COLLABORATION

CONTRIBUTION

GRAPHICS

PHILOSOPHY

EXPERIENCE

circle of blue

INTERVIEWS

CHINA PHOTOS

China's water use has **increased 35%** over the past 30 years.

China's resources have **decreased 15%** over the past decade.

CHOKE POINT: CHINA AND THE GREAT LAKES

Choke Point: China is Circle of Blue's most recent project. These stories report on the collision between water resources and the growing energy demand in China. Circle of Blue's reporting has helped draw attention to China's growing water crisis and the challenges the country faces. After Choke Point: China, Circle of Blue will shift its focus toward reporting on climate change in the Great Lakes.



Keith Schneider, Senior Editor for Circle of Blue

PARTNER

STORY

COLLABORATION

CONTRIBUTION

GRAPHICS

PHILOSOPHY

EXPERIENCE

circle of blue

INTERVIEWS

CHINA PHOTOS

China's water use has **increased 35%** over the past 30 years.

China's resources have **decreased 15%** over the past decade.

CHOKE POINT: CHINA AND THE GREAT LAKES

Choke Point: China is Circle of Blue's most recent project. These stories report on the collision between water resources and the growing energy demand in China. Circle of Blue's reporting has helped draw attention to China's growing water crisis and the challenges the country faces. After Choke Point: China, Circle of Blue will shift its focus toward reporting on climate change in the Great Lakes.

Click on the arrows to see photos from Dragons in the Deep and Choke Point: China
Click here to read "Hidden Waters and Dragons in the Deep: The Fresh Water Crisis in China's Karst Regions."



Photo by J. Carl Ganter

A farmer outside Qibudi in China's Yunnan Province surveys his field. Although it has been raining for days, the same field, where karst stone is beginning to poke through the topsoil, turns dry for eight months of the year. He carries household water three times daily from a hillside pond. He and his elderly father make due on six buckets of water each day.

Thesis Images

http://seasonschafer.com/files/thesis_final/thesis_final.html

PARTNER

STORY


COLLABORATION

CONTRIBUTION

GRAPHICS

PHILOSOPHY

EXPERIENCE

 circle of blue


BSU AND COB

IN CLASS

During the Spring 2011 semester, **20** Ball State students partnered with **Circle of Blue** to develop graphics for **Choke Point: China.**

WORKING TOGETHER: BALL STATE AND CIRCLE OF BLUE

In Fall 2010, Circle of Blue teamed up with journalism graphics majors at Ball State University to collaboratively develop interactive information graphics for the Choke Point: U.S. and Choke Point: China series. As a result, 25 BSU students have seen their work published in the Circle of Blue website and included in a number of international presentations on the global water and energy crisis.



Greg Hudson, senior graphics student

PARTNER

STORY

COLLABORATION

CONTRIBUTION

GRAPHICS

PHILOSOPHY

EXPERIENCE

 circle of blue

BSU AND COB

IN CLASS

During the Spring 2011 semester, **20** Ball State students partnered with **Circle of Blue** to develop graphics for **Choke Point: China.**

WORKING TOGETHER: BALL STATE AND CIRCLE OF BLUE

In Fall 2010, Circle of Blue teamed up with journalism graphics majors at Ball State University to collaboratively develop interactive information graphics for the Choke Point: U.S. and Choke Point: China series. As a result, 25 BSU students have seen their work published in the Circle of Blue website and included in a number of international presentations on the global water and energy crisis.



Kelly Shea, team leader

Thesis Images

http://seasonschafer.com/files/thesis_final/thesis_final.html

PARTNER

STORY

COLLABORATION

CONTRIBUTION

GRAPHICS

PHILOSOPHY

EXPERIENCE

 circle of blue


CONTRIBUTION

PRESENTATIONS

Interactive
information graphics
allow editors to
simplify
and visualize
complex
information

BALL STATE'S CONTRIBUTION TO CIRCLE OF BLUE

Information graphics created for the Choke Point: China series help make complex information more accessible to a wider audience. They also help Circle of Blue editors tell the story of water and energy in China through visualizations, maps and diagrams that are easy to understand. Graphics create by Ball State students have also been used in a number of Circle of Blue presentations around the world.



PARTNER

STORY

COLLABORATION

CONTRIBUTION

GRAPHICS

PHILOSOPHY

EXPERIENCE

 circle of blue

CONTRIBUTION

PRESENTATIONS

Interactive
information graphics
allow editors to
simplify
and visualize
complex
information

BALL STATE'S CONTRIBUTION TO CIRCLE OF BLUE

Information graphics created for the Choke Point: China series help make complex information more accessible to a wider audience. They also help Circle of Blue editors tell the story of water and energy in China through visualizations, maps and diagrams that are easy to understand. Graphics create by Ball State students have also been used in a number of Circle of Blue presentations around the world.



J. Carl Ganter shares Circle of Blue's findings and Ball State's graphics at Ball State University.

Graphics created by Ball State students have been presented along with Circle of Blue's findings at:

- The U.S. Embassy in Beijing
- An Energy and Environment Roundtable
- Tsinghua Forum for Environmental and Energy Law
- Chinese Academy of Engineering Department of Water Resources
- China Institute of Water Resources and Hydropower Research
- Ningxia University
- Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
- Capitol Hill briefing

12

Thesis Images

http://seasonschafer.com/files/thesis_final/thesis_final.html

PARTNERSTORYCOLLABORATIONCONTRIBUTIONGRAPHICS PHILOSOPHYEXPERIENCE

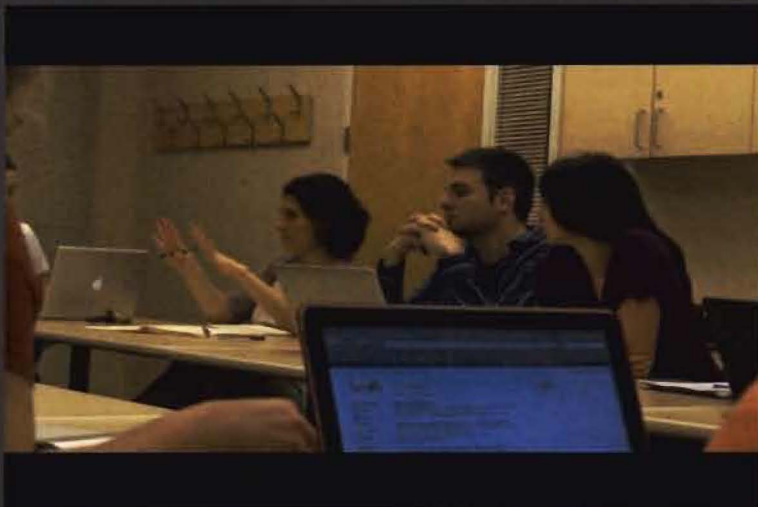
circle of blue

BSU GRAPHICS

GALLERY

BALL STATE'S GRAPHICS

Interactive information graphics created by Ball State students include data visualization, charts, graphics, maps, diagrams and typographic displays. Students often worked in teams to collaborate with Circle of Blue reports and editors, conduct original research and execture the illustration work and programming for these projects.



In the Ball State
immersive
learning
project with
Cirde of Blue
BSU students
created
11 graphics
for Choke Point: China

PARTNERSTORYCOLLABORATIONCONTRIBUTIONGRAPHICS PHILOSOPHYEXPERIENCE

circle of blue

BSU GRAPHICS

GALLERY

BALL STATE'S GRAPHICS

Interactive information graphics created by Ball State students include data visualization, charts, graphics, maps, diagrams and typographic displays. Students often worked in teams to collaborate with Circle of Blue reports and editors, conduct original research and execture the illustration work and programming for these projects.

To see the BSU graphics created for Circle of Blue in Spring 2011, click on the icons below.



In the Ball State
immersive
learning
project with
Cirde of Blue
BSU students
created
11 graphics
for Choke Point: China

Thesis Images

http://seasonschafer.com/files/thesis_final/thesis_final.html

PARTNER	STORY	COLLABORATION	CONTRIBUTION	GRAPHICS	PHILOSOPHY	EXPERIENCE	Circle of Blue
---------	-------	---------------	--------------	----------	------------	------------	----------------

BSU IMMERSION

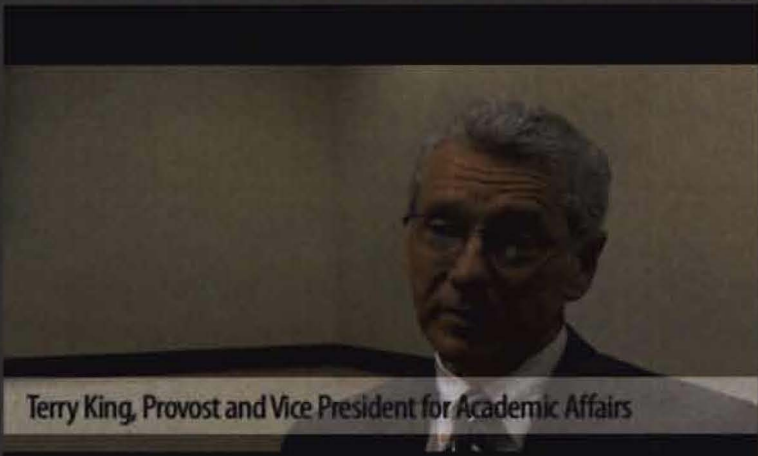
THE PROGRAMS

During the 2009-10 academic year, there were **135** immersive learning programs at Ball State.

That same year, the College of Communication, Information, and Media sponsored **28** immersive learning programs.

BALL STATE AND IMMERSIVE LEARNING

Ball State takes pride in a focus on immersive learning. In many programs on campus, students have the opportunity to participate in projects that partner with professionals and all students to apply what they have learned in a real-world setting. By working with Circle of Blue, journalism graphics majors gained real journalism experience, an invaluable opportunity.



Terry King, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

PARTNER	STORY	COLLABORATION	CONTRIBUTION	GRAPHICS	PHILOSOPHY	EXPERIENCE	Circle of Blue
---------	-------	---------------	--------------	----------	------------	------------	----------------

BSU IMMERSION

THE PROGRAMS

During the 2009-10 academic year, there were **135** immersive learning programs at Ball State.

That same year, the College of Communication, Information, and Media sponsored **28** immersion learning programs.

BALL STATE AND IMMERSIVE LEARNING

Ball State takes pride in a focus on immersive learning. In many programs on campus, students have the opportunity to participate in projects that partner with professionals and all students to apply what they have learned in a real-world setting. By working with Circle of Blue, journalism graphics majors gained real journalism experience, an invaluable opportunity.

Students can earn three to 18 credit hours for immersive learning projects at Ball State. These courses are typically offered within a student's major.

Click through the gallery to see photos of journalism graphics majors working on the Circle of Blue project.



Photo by Valerie Carnevale


Click here to learn more about immersive learning at Ball State.

7 characteristics shared by Ball State immersive learning experiences

- carry academic credit
- engage participants in an active learning process that is student-driven but guided by a faculty mentor
- produce a tangible outcome or product, such as a business plan, policy recommendation, book, play or dived
- involve at least one team of students, often working on a project that is interdisciplinary in nature
- include community partners and create an impact on the larger community as well as on the student participants
- focus on student learning outcomes
- help students define a career path or make connections to a profession or industry

Thesis Images


http://seasonschafer.com/files/thesis_final/thesis_final.html

[PARTNER](#) [STORY](#) [COLLABORATION](#) [CONTRIBUTION](#) [GRAPHICS](#) [PHILOSOPHY](#) [EXPERIENCE](#) 


[EXPERIENCE](#) [BSU BIOS](#) [CREDITS](#)

BSU STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE

The collaboration with Circle of Blue gave students an experience completely different from ordinary classroom exercises. Students learned to work on a deadline for a client and began to build relationships with professionals. The students also got to see their work published with a professional news organization and got great work examples for their portfolios.



Valerie Carnevale, junior graphics student


[PARTNER](#) [STORY](#) [COLLABORATION](#) [CONTRIBUTION](#) [GRAPHICS](#) [PHILOSOPHY](#) [EXPERIENCE](#) 

[EXPERIENCE](#) [BSU BIOS](#) [CREDITS](#)

BSU STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE

The collaboration with Circle of Blue gave students an experience completely different from ordinary classroom exercises. Students learned to work on a deadline for a client and began to build relationships with professionals. The students also got to see their work published with a professional news organization and got great work examples for their portfolios.

Click on different group members to see their bios.

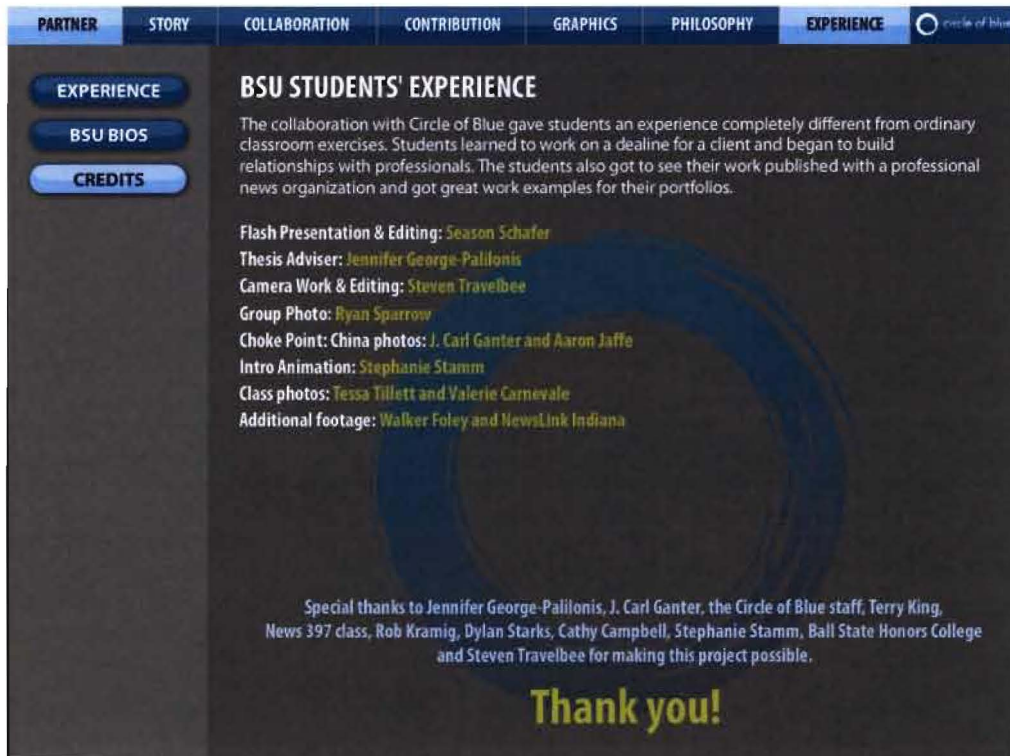


CHELSEA KARDOKUS

Chelsea is a sophomore majoring in journalism graphics. She is a Chief Designer at the Ball State Daily News and a designer for Cardinal Communications, the student-run public relations firm. Last summer she interned at the Staten Island Advance and this summer will be interning at the Wall Street Journal.

Thesis Images

http://seasonschafer.com/files/thesis_final/thesis_final.html



Works Cited

- Capinegro, Megan. Personal interview. 11 Apr. 2011.
- Carnevale, Valerie. Personal interview. 13 Apr. 2011.
- Carter, Katelin. Personal interview. 13 Apr. 2011.
- Cato, Tyrone Malik. Personal interview. 14 Apr. 2011.
- "Choke Point: China." *Water News | Circle of Blue*. MediaVia LLC, 2011. Web. June 2011.
<<http://circleofblue.org>>.
- Cooper, Daniel. Personal interview. 12 Apr. 2011.
- Foley, Walker. Personal interview. 11 Apr. 2011.
- Ganter, J. Carl. Personal interview. 22 Mar. 2011.
- George-Palilonis, Jennifer. Personal interview. 12 Apr. 2011.
- Hudson, Greg. Personal interview. 13 Apr. 2011.
- "Immersive Learning." *Ball State University*. Ball State University, 2011. Web. June 2011.
<<http://cms.bsu.edu/Academics/UndergraduateStudy/BeyondtheClassroom/ImmersiveLearning.aspx>>.
- Kardokus, Chelsea. Personal interview. 14 Apr. 2011.
- King, Terry. Personal interview. 28 Apr. 2011.
- Manning, Justin. Personal interview. 14 Apr. 2011.
- May, Chelsea. Personal interview. 14 Apr. 2011.
- Meredith, Stephanie. Personal interview. 13 Apr. 2011.
- Parker, Aubrey. Interview by Travis Miller. 5 May 2011.
- Roesch, Kate. Personal interview. 11 Apr. 2011.
- Rosenberger, Vicki. Personal interview. 11 Apr. 2011.
- Schafer, Season. Interview by Steven Travelbee. Print.
- Schneider, Keith. Interview by J. Carl Ganter. 6 May 2011.
- Shea, Kelly. Personal interview. 13 Apr. 2011.
- Spangler, Liz. Personal interview. 11 Apr. 2011.
- Stamm, Stephanie. Personal interview. 13 Apr. 2011.
- Tillett, Tessa. Personal interview. 13 Apr. 2011.
- Townsend, Mark. Personal interview. 14 Apr. 2011.